

Hail the IT heroes



CHAMPIONS ALL: (From left) Mr Sim Wong Hoo, Dr Su Guanng, Mr Robert Yap, Mr Carlos Fernandes and Mr Goh Beng Yeow.

At the IT Leaders Award 2003, five were recognised for their contributions to IT industry here.

■ By GRACE CHNG

An air force man and one who swims with sharks. These were the unlikely heroes of last Saturday's IT Leaders Award 2003.

Five champs in all, including Creative Technology's Sim Wong Hoo, received their honours at the awards organised by the Singapore Computer Society since 1997. Mr Khaw Boon Wan, the Senior Minister of State for Transport and Information, Communications and the Arts, handed out the trophies at a gala dinner.

Mr Sim was named the

Person of the Year for his contributions to the IT sector (see box story). The other awards went to:

• **Dr Su Guanng, 53, founding chief executive of the Defence Science and Technology Agency.** He is now the president of the Nanyang Technological University.

A President and Colombo Plan scholar, he has been working on electronic warfare systems since the 1970s.

The highlight of his career was a brand new software and hardware for the early aircraft warning system. In the early 1980s, he was working on soft-

ware defence systems with a group of about 15 to 16 people. Then there was still reliance on the foreign manufacturer of the systems for support.

"The decision to break away from the manufacturer was really exciting. The technology used then in the early aircraft warning system was based on old technology like assembly language. This was a huge challenge for us because this was a flying aircraft. We had to make sure that whatever we put in must work."

His team took on the job and learned enough to re-develop the entire hardware and software,

which was successfully implemented in the late 80s. For his contributions to the growth of defence science and technology including IT for Singapore's defence, Dr Su was inducted into the SCS Hall of Fame.

• **Mr Robert Yap, 51, of global logistics business, YCH.** Known as the supply chain guru who has implemented SCM throughout his empire.

He first ran a firm distributing PCs. But that closed down. All the PCs found their way to his family logistics company. He became an IT convert.

Then he found out that good software was needed to run operations. So he learned database software with his team and wrote the applications for his logistics business. From there he went on to create a logistics

Sim gets creative again

Creative Technology founder and chairman Sim Wong Hoo, 47, was named Person of the Year by the Singapore Computer Society (SCS). This was for his contributions to the IT industry, said the society at its annual IT Leader Awards.

At a press conference last week, Mr Sim said Creative is now more entrenched than ever in digital entertainment with lots more products than a few years ago.

The company has over the last 22 years invented many IT devices. It was among the first in the world to develop the Cubic CT which could do multilingual computing. Although this business did not take off, Mr Sim was right on target with the sound card. It took the world by storm and is today the global de facto standard for digital sound.

Around the sound card, he built a digital entertainment business which include MP3 players and speakers. Even in today's depressed market, Creative has a market capital of S\$930 million, a laudable effort for a local company. — Grace Chng

management solution. He is now looking at how handheld computers can be used to acknowledge receipt of goods and then to trigger the payment system.

Today YCH uses IT to differentiate itself from its competitors. Mr Yap earned the Friend of IT award for his vision and innate passion to marry logistics and IT.

• **Mr Carlos Fernandes, 26, founder of software firm, Perceptivel.** He travels the world to get business, but also finds time to swim alongside whale sharks off the coast of Thailand, ski in the Sierra and trek in the Grand Canyon.

Awarded the Young Professional of the Year award for his innovations. He cre-

ated software that is helping companies to identify and prioritise customers who visit their websites. (see Perspective page CT 12 on Mr Fernandes' dreams.)

• **Mr Goh Beng Yeow, 23, IT Youth Award winner.** An NSman in the air force. Founder of Xin-Design which specialises in web and mobile solutions. He started the firm while studying at the Nanyang Polytechnic in 2000. The firm has been in the black since then. Praised for the leadership roles he played as an IT ambassador and IT youth leader, including holding IT workshops for secondary school students while in NYP, he will read economics at the Singapore Management University this year.

The career highlight was the development of the hardware and software system for the early aircraft warning system. The challenge was to make sure everything works in a flying aircraft.

— Dr Su Guanng

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